

**Chairwoman Yvette D. Clarke (D-NY)**

**Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology  
Committee on Homeland Security**

***The Domestic Nuclear Detection Office: Can It Overcome Past Problems and  
Chart a New Direction?***

**Opening Statement as prepared**

The subcommittee meets today to welcome Dr. Warren Stern as the new director of the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office.

I think it bears repeating that the title of today's hearing is "The Domestic Nuclear Detection Office: Can it Overcome Past Problems and Chart a New Direction?"

That pretty much sums it up Mr. Stern. The DNDO is tasked with arguably the most important national security mission there is: prevention of nuclear terrorism.

There are many facets to that mission. DNDO is responsible for the Global Nuclear Detection Architecture, our overall national strategy for locating and interdicting illicit nuclear materials into this country.

This means working within the Department, across the interagency, with the White House, with Congress, and with international partners to find and stop nuclear smuggling.

You are the coordinator of the National Technical Nuclear Forensics Center, focused on attribution of nuclear materials and devices.

You are responsible for supporting the operational entities within the Department such as CBP, the Coast Guard, and the Secret Service in carrying out their mission to stop terrorists with weapons of mass destruction.

You are responsible with developing, procuring, and deploying cutting edge technologies to support these missions.

The DNDO has had some low-profile successes and high-profile failures in all of these areas. As we on this panel know, that is sometimes the nature of public service.

Despite the challenges that DNDO faces, I would like to applaud you Mr. Stern for your dedication to your duty to protect this country, as evidenced by your willingness to take on this difficult task within a Department that is still in transition.

While I do assume that you understand full well that you have a lot of work to do and a lot of problems that need to be fixed, it is my responsibility as the Chair of the Subcommittee to remind you of those problems and the work you need to do nonetheless.

The Advanced Spectroscopic Portal, as one major example, has morphed from a promising technology offering the promise of improved security and commercial efficiency to a symbol of failure for your office.

You have to bring that program to a satisfactory conclusion – one way or another – in the very near future. Your credibility and the future success of DNDO depend on it.